



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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CHAFEE HERALDS CONSERVATION AND DRINKING WATER FUNDING FOR RHODE ISLAND

Measure Approved Today by the Senate and the Full Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee has worked to secure appropriations totaling \$4.472 million for Rhode Island projects as part of the fiscal year 2006 Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The act was passed today by both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and will proceed to the President for signature.

“This measure contains essential new funding for a number of projects across Rhode Island. Among these are priority projects to preserve high-risk open space, upgrade water infrastructure, and conserve the natural resources of Rhode Island,” Senator Chafee said.

The Act contains \$525,000 in critical new funding for the Rhode Island Refuge Complex. The Refuge Complex, consisting of five refuges – Sachuest Point, Block Island, Ninigret, Trustum Pond, and the John H. Chafee Refuge at Pettaquamscutt Cove – encompasses a diverse array of forested uplands, coastal wetlands, grasslands, salt marshes, and barrier beaches. Funding included in the fiscal year 2006 Interior Appropriations Act for the Complex will be used to acquire several high-priority properties in areas adjacent to the refuges where development pressure threatens open space protection. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be working with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, and several local land trusts to identify properties with willing sellers where opportunities exist for land acquisition.

The Bugnet Tract in the Town of West Greenwich will receive \$600,000 in Forest Legacy funding. As the top priority of the Rhode Island Forest Legacy Program, the Bugnet Tract is home to a sustainable timber operation that has been a Rhode Island certified American Tree Farm since 1970. With several biodiversity and natural resource

protection features associated with the property, the Bugnet Tract lies within the larger 8,500-acre Big River Management Area, which is managed for public drinking water supply. With new wellhead sites planned for this area, conservation of the Bugnet property through the Forest Legacy Program is critical for protecting the water quality and quantity of this important aquifer.

The Act also contains \$150,000 in Save America's Treasures funding for Westerly's Wilcox Park. Designed in 1898 by Warren H. Manning, a pioneer in landscape architecture, the creation of this self-contained strolling park in the heart of a regional center of commerce and government was a remarkable achievement during the 19th century. Save America's Treasures funding will be used to replace failing lampposts with new period-appropriate fixtures, as well as replacing park walkways, resetting a bluestone fountain, and repairing the perimeter stone walls. "This preservation work will ensure that Wilcox Park continues to be open to the public as an arboretum and as a community-gathering place for the people of Rhode Island and other visitors," noted Senator Chafee.

As part of the State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) program, a total of \$875,000 will be allocated to assist the Town of Westerly with its plans to construct a new 1.5 million gallon steel water storage tank, which would replace the existing 73-year-old tank located on the same site. The old tank is undersized and functionally obsolete at 500,000 gallons, and structurally deficient due to severe corrosion of its steel supports. The new tank will provide much needed additional storage volume to accommodate high usage areas of Westerly, including Watch Hill and Misquamicut Beach, as well as additional emergency storage for fire protection. The town has already completed detailed construction designs and specifications for the new tank.

Additionally under STAG, \$500,000 has been appropriated to the Town of Cumberland for installation and looping of water mains. With concerns voiced by the Rhode Island Department of Health for the exceedance of drinking water standards, the state has mandated the hiring of an engineering firm to assist the town. As Cumberland's 1954 plant is now outdated, numerous dead end water mains hinder service and delivery, and a major pipeline has not been upgraded since its original installation in the 1930s. A bottleneck where two mains converge to one 10-inch pipeline limits the amount of water that can be delivered to northern parts of Cumberland. This funding will assist in upgrading the infrastructure to meet the necessary standards.

Finally, \$200,000 will be provided to the Town of North Smithfield for improvements to the town's water infrastructure. Approximately 80 homes in the Waterford Village area of North Smithfield are in danger of losing their drinking water source. The town would like to tie into the water system of the neighboring city of Woonsocket, which has an abundant supply of drinking water. The town is also interested in upgrading the water system's meters.

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